Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior version, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Original)   A method for managing and tracking information items within a message-based system, the message-based system having a viewer, the viewer including a first, a second and a third viewing panes, the method comprising the operations of:

(a)   generating a plurality of thrasks, each of the thrasks including at least one information item having a set of metadata;

(b)   sorting a new information item into one of the thrasks in accordance with at least one criterion; and

(c)   displaying in the first viewing pane some of the thrasks, and displaying in the second viewing pane a list of the information items of a thrask selected from the displayed thrasks, for each of the displayed information items at least one of the respective metadata being displayed, and displaying in the third viewing pane some of the content of an information item selected from the list of the displayed information items.

2. (Original)   The method of Claim 1 further comprising the operation of:

(e)   updating at least one of the metadata of one of the information items in one of the thrasks.

3. (Original)   The method of Claim 1 wherein, in operation (a), a thrask is generated in response to a user action.

4. (Original)   The method of Claim 1 wherein, in operation (b), a new information item is sorted into one of the thrasks in response to a user action.

5. (Original)   The method of Claim 1 wherein operation (c) is performed in response to a user interaction with one of the first and second viewing panes.

6. (Original)   A system for managing and tracking information items within an message-based system, the message-based system having a viewer, the viewer including a first, a second and a third viewing panes, the system comprising:

(a)   a thrask generating module generating a plurality of thrasks, each of the thrasks including at least one information item having a set of metadata;

(b)   a sorting module sorting a new information item into one of the thrasks in accordance with at least one criterion; and

(c)   a display module displaying in the first viewing pane some of the thrasks, and displaying in the second viewing pane a list of the information items of a thrask selected from the displayed thrasks, for each of the displayed information items at least one of the respective metadata being displayed, and displaying in the third viewing pane some of the content of an information item selected from the list of the displayed information items.

7. (Original)   The system of Claim 6 further comprising:

(e)   an updating module updating at least one of the metadata of one of the information items in one of the thrasks.

8. (Original)   The system of Claim 6 wherein the thrask generating module generates a thrask in response to a user action.

9. (Original)   The system of Claim 6 wherein the sorting module sorts a new information item into one of the thrasks in response to a user action.

10. (Original) The system of Claim 6 wherein the display module displays in response to a user interaction with one of the first and second viewing panes.

11. (Currently amended)   A system for managing and tracking information items within an message-based system on a user system, the system having a viewer including a first and a second viewing panes, the system comprising:

(a)   a mail handling module importing a new mail item into the system, the imported mail item being transformed into one or more information items which are sorted into a corresponding thrask, the information items having metadata;

(b)   a thrask list module controlling a display of and user interaction with a list of thrasks in the first viewing pane;

(b̶c̲)   an item list module controlling a display of and user interaction with a list of information items of a thrask selected from the list of thrasks in the second viewing pane; and

(d̲e̶)   a notification module receiving notifications of logical events and coordinating respective system responses with the mail handling module, the thrask list module, and the item list module.

12. (Currently amended)   The system of Claim 11, wherein the viewer includes a third viewing pane, further comprising:

(e̲d̶)   a content preview module controlling a display of the content of an information item selected from the list of information items in the third viewing pane.

13. (Original) The system of Claim 11 further comprising:

(f̲e̶)   a form module managing a set of forms, the forms being windows visible to a user.

14. (Original) The system of Claim 13 wherein the form module manages initialization of the main window of the system.

15. (Original) The system of Claim 13 wherein the form module includes logic to handle a compose form, the compose form facilitating a user to write, save and send a new message.

16. (Original) The system of Claim 13 wherein the form module manages an item form, the item form allowing a user to see details of an information item in an item window.

17. (currently amended)   The system of Claim 11 further comprising:

(g̶f̶)   a relational database holding data of the system; and

(h̶g̶)   a database module accessing the relational database.

18. (Original) The system of Claim 11 wherein the mail handling module sorts the information items into a same thrask that includes a message to which the new mail item is a response.

19. (Original) The system of Claim 11 wherein the mail handling module sorts the information items into a default thrask when the new mail item is not a response to any message in any of the thrasks.

20. (Original) The system of Claim 11 wherein the thrask list module displays in proximity of a thrask a composite representation of certain metadata of the information items in the thrask.

21. (Original) The system of Claim 11 wherein the composite representation indicates obligations for the thrask.

22. (Original) The system of Claim 11 wherein the thrask list module displays in proximity of a thrask an indicator representing an approaching deadline